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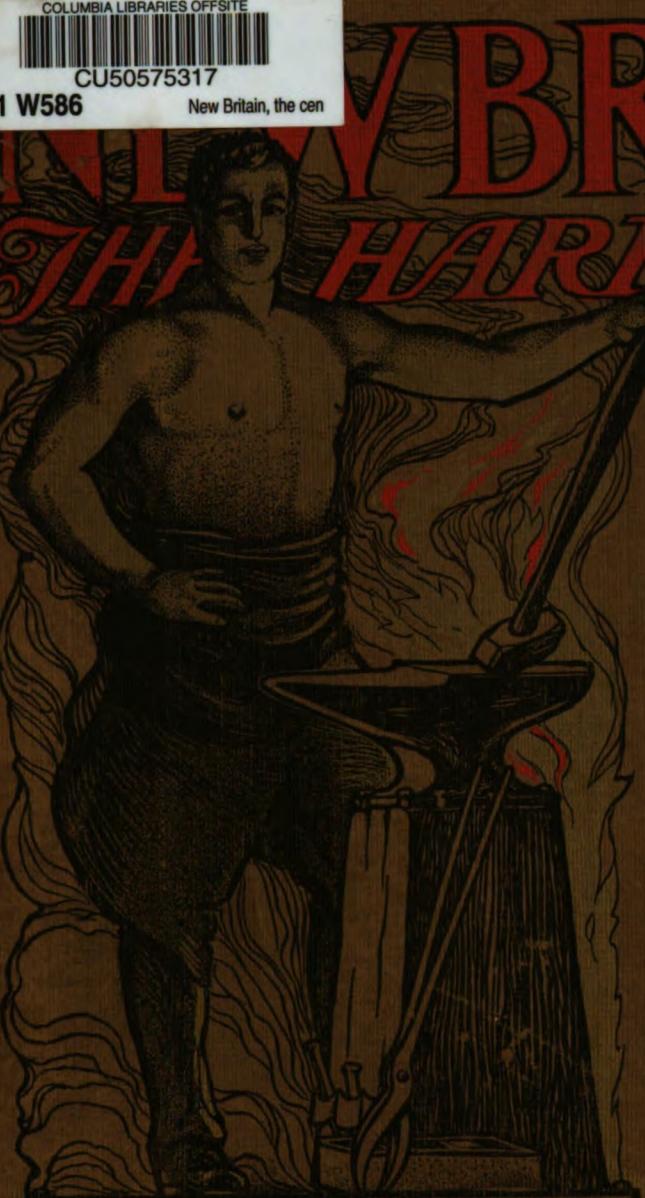
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NEW BRITAIN THE HARDWARE CENTER

RECAP



CONTAINING A
BRIEF REVIEW OF
THE WONDERFUL
INDUSTRIAL
DEVELOPMENT

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New Britain 
The Hardware Center 

"ARE WE NOT FOREMOST IN ALL
DISCOVERY, AND IS NOT THE
WHOLE WORLD GIDDY BY REASON
OF OUR INVENTIONS?"—*Ruskin*

Text written by Marcus White, Principal
State Normal School, New Britain.

Compiled by H. B. Humason, New Britain.

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New Britain

The Center of Hardware Manufacture

Containing a Brief Review of its
marvelous *INDUSTRIAL
DEVELOPMENT* & & &

*WITH VARIOUS ILLUSTRATIONS OF ITS FACTORIES AND
PORTRAITS OF THE MEN WHO HAVE BUILT THEM UP*



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at NEW BRITAIN, CONNECTICUT by
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THE STANLEY WORKS.

LANDERS, FRARY & CLARK ~ STANLEY RULE & LEVEL CO
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When the Whistle Blows

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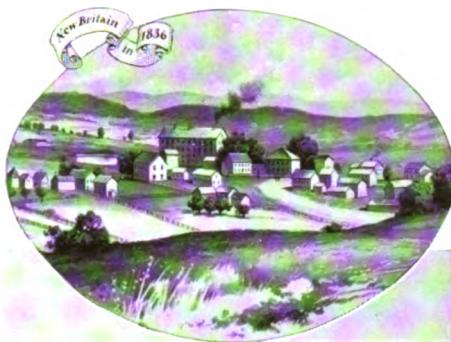
New Britain



HEN in 1839 the New Haven and Hartford Railroad was opened between Connecticut's two capitals, it left the little village of New Britain two miles to the west. This is not at all surprising, for the men who built the railroad did not dream that this little parish, not yet large enough to be a town by itself, would, before the century's end, so completely outstrip its neighbors, and become one of the most remarkable manufacturing cities in the whole country.

The success of New Britain owes but little to what are ordinarily called natural advantages. It has no sea coast or navigable waters; it is wanting in water power, and its means of communication with the outside world were for years inferior to those of neighboring towns. Yet its success is easily explained. It is due entirely to the stable, upright and energetic character of its people, under the leadership of the remarkable group of men who founded its industries and shaped its future policy.

We are all familiar with the little band of pilgrims that in 1636 made their way, under the leadership of the Rev. Thomas Hooker, from Massachusetts to the fertile valley of the Connecticut, and settled the three towns of Hartford, Wethersfield and Windsor. New Britain also is the result of that migration, for it was members of that same band, who, moving a little to the west, founded in 1640, the town of Farmington, within the limits of which was Great Swamp, afterwards known as New Britain, and it is interesting to know that Rev. Samuel Hooker, son of Thomas Hooker, ministered to this people for nearly forty years. Interesting glimpses of the character of the people of New Britain are to be found in its early history. New Britain, as has been said, was originally a portion of the town of Farmington, and that part of the town which is now New Britain was called the Great Swamp. An Indian trail, some eight or ten miles long, led from the Great Swamp to the church at the center of the town. It is of this trail that the Rev. John Denison of Massachusetts paints the following picture: "It is a Sabbath morning in that lonely wilderness. We can see the little group of houses huddled together; the tall, sharp pickets of the stockade; a drum is beating; from one cabin after another armed men are gathering; a phalanx is formed; the order 'March!' is given.



New Britain from Walnut Hill

What! is this a foraging party? An expedition against some hostile Indian tribe? No, when men go to battle they leave their families at home. Between the front and rear ranks walk the women, many of them with children in their arms. All take their course northward and strike into the woods. They strike the trail and march steadily on, the men with guns well loaded, the eyes of the leaders searching the underbrush with many a keen and anxious glance. That Indian trail must have been eight or ten miles long, yet they march on uncomplainingly till they reach the Farmington meeting-house. There Samuel Hooker preaches to them the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ."

The increasing size of the Great Swamp Settlement in time brought a demand for a new parish, and the General Assembly is petitioned October 16, 1701, for its establishment. Let us look at the names signed to this petition—John Hart, John Lee, Daniel Andrews, Thomas North, Nehemiah Porter, Isaac Norton, Jacob Bronson, Isaac Cowles, Samuel Smith, Isaac Lewis, Anthony Judd, Thomas Hart, John Stanley, names as familiar to-day in the city as they were two hundred years ago. The petition was granted and the Great Swamp Society founded. This new parish comprised much of what is now the town of New Britain and the town of Berlin. It was not till 1754 that New

Britain had a separate existence as a parish, and not till almost exactly one hundred years later that it was incorporated as a separate town.

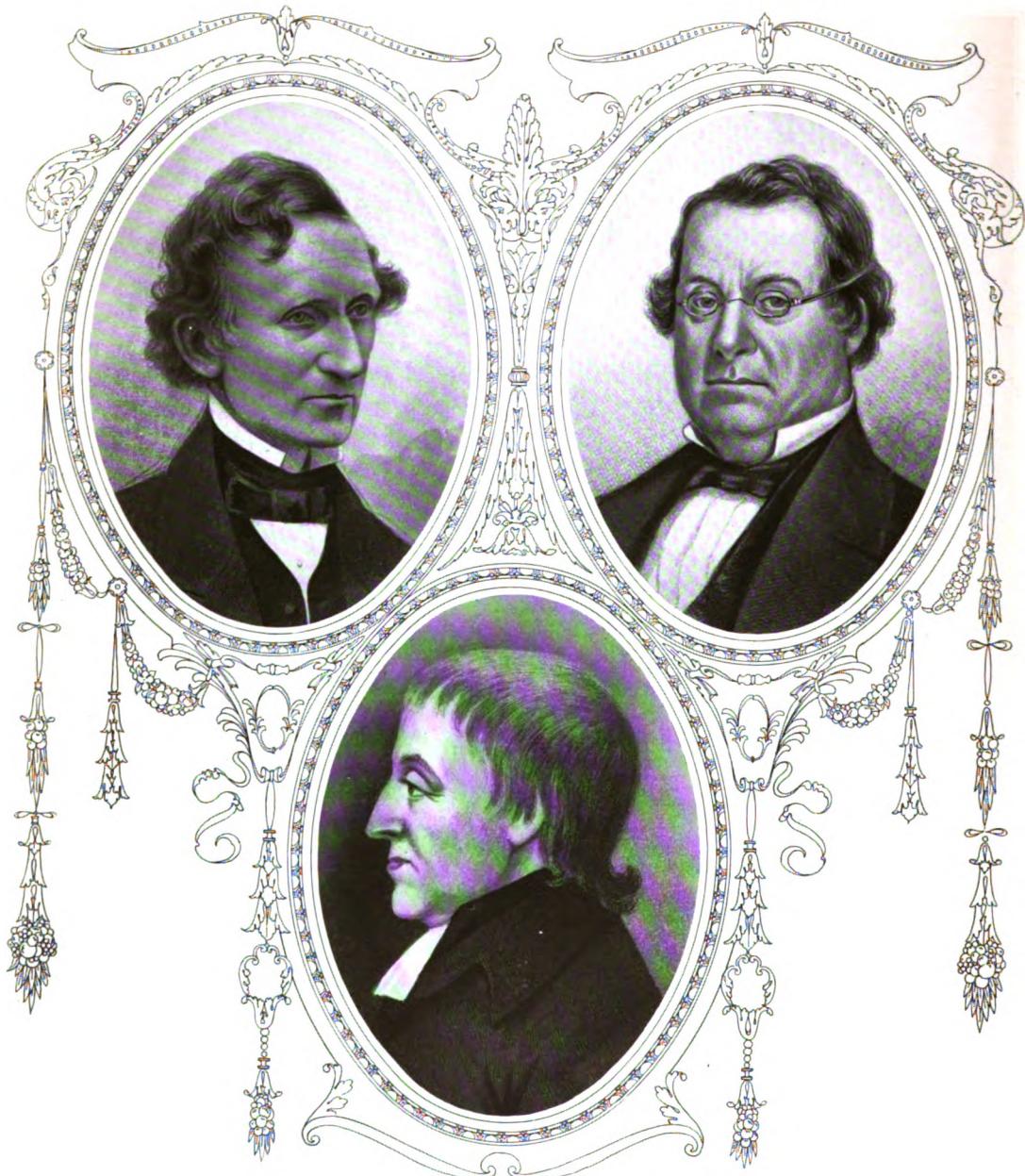
The little parish was remarkably fortunate in the choice of a pastor. In 1751 the Rev. John Smalley was installed there, and for more than fifty years he preached the gospel to this people. But he did far more than preach the gospel. Dr. Smalley became one of the most noted divines of his time. He was born in Lebanon, Connecticut, "the little village that nurtured fifty-three clergymen," and the home of such men as Governor Jonathan Trumbull and Governor Buckingham, Connecticut's two war governors. His reputation as a scholar and preacher brought many ambitious young men to New Britain to learn of him. Among his pupils were Oliver Ellsworth, who became Chief Justice of the United States, Jeremiah Mason, United States Senator from New Hampshire, Ebenezer Porter, President of Andover Theological Seminary, Abijah Carrington, State Senator and Comptroller, and many other noted men of the time. The influence of such a man living and preaching for more than fifty years in a small New England parish, every man, woman and child of which he knew personally, can hardly be overestimated. His authority was acknowledged and his advice constantly

*Rev. John
Smalley
Portrait
Facing p.*



Elihu Burritt

Seth J. North



John Smalley

sought. Tradition has it that one of the first business enterprises in the town was started by money lent by him.

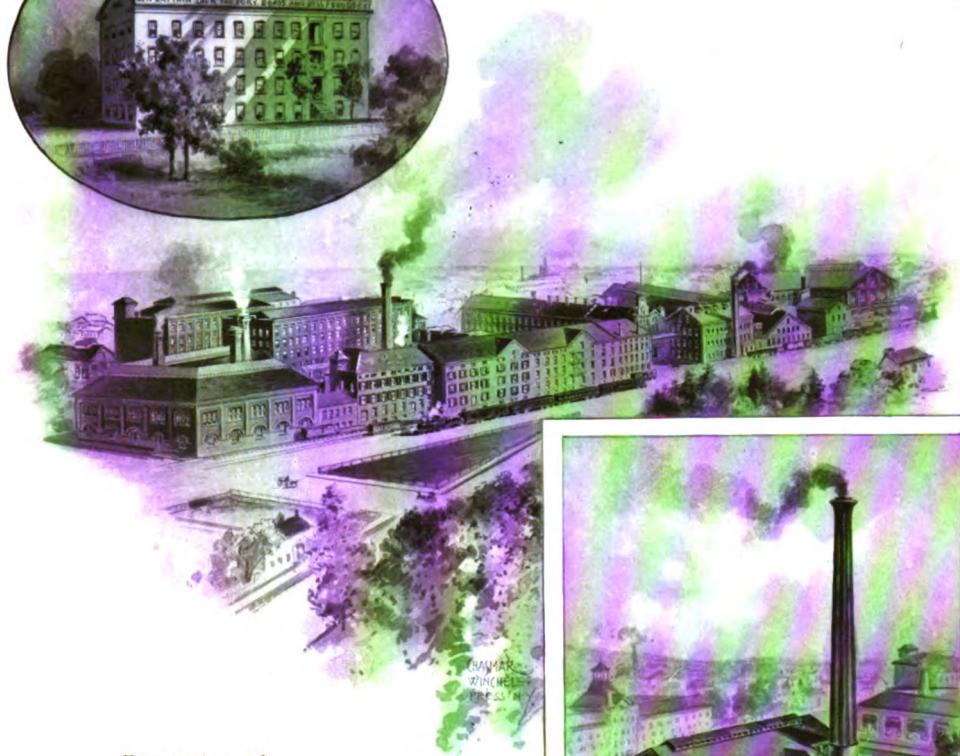
Among the first settlers of the old town of Farmington was John North. Thomas North, Jr., a grandson of this John North, became one of the early inhabitants of the Great Swamp, and his grandson, James North, born in 1748, was the real founder of the manufacturing industries of the place. James North was a blacksmith by trade. His native ingenuity and enterprise, however, soon led him beyond the ordinary work of the blacksmith shop, and he made knee and shoe buckles, andirons, shovels, tongs, etc., and sold them to his neighbors. He saw, from the result of his own labors, the possibilities that lay in the working of metal, and he sent his eldest son, James, together with Joseph Shipman, the son of a neighbor, to Stockbridge, Massachusetts, as apprentices to Joseph Barton, a skillful maker of articles in brass. These young men, on their return to New Britain in the spring of 1800, went into business for themselves, and this is the beginning of that industry, the extensive development of which has made New Britain known throughout the country as the "Hardware City." James North's descendants became very influential in the community and made the name of North a household word in New

Britain. It is interesting to look over the list of names of the one hundred and twenty original members of the South Congregational Society, founded in 1842, mainly by members withdrawing from the First Church. In this list we find no less than thirteen Norths. The stability of New Britain families is well shown by the fact that in the same list are found nine Stanleys and eighteen Harts, one-third of the entire membership of the church coming from three families. Yet when we look at the size of the families of those early days, we cease to wonder. Among Great Swamp statistics we find that Samuel Hart and wife had seventeen children; Seth Stanley, sixteen; Ebenezer Steele, Jr., fifteen; Benjamin Judd, Lemuel Hotchkiss, Adonijah Lewis, Nathaniel Churchill, twelve each, and Gad Stanley, Benjamin Hart, Jehudi Hart and Ebenezer Steele, each eleven.

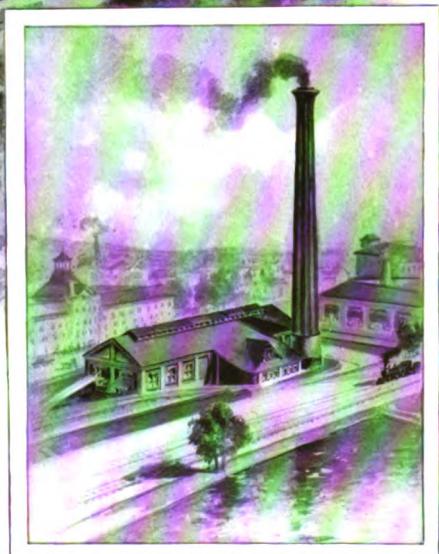
*Seth J.
North
Portrait
Plaque*

Dr. J. W. Cooper, who was for twenty years the beloved pastor of the South Congregational Church, and who has made himself very familiar with New Britain's history, has recently said that industrial New Britain owes more to Seth J. North than to any other one man. Seth North, or Major North, as he was generally called, was the son of James North, and he began life as an assistant in his father's shop. At twenty-one he formed a partnership with his brother, James, to manufacture sleigh

In 1836



Factories of
Russell & Erwin Mfg. Co., 1903



Power House

HOWARD S. HART President
B. A. HAWLEY . . First Vice-President
EDWARD MEYER . . Second Vice-President
I. D. RUSSELL Treasurer
THEODORE E. SMITH . . . Secretary

bells, and this was the first of many ventures in different lines of manufacturing. He was a shrewd, intelligent man of business, enterprising in opening new lines of industry, and steadfast in carrying out his plans. He was most always successful in what he undertook, and at his death, in 1851, he was one of the richest men in Hartford County.

*Elihu
Burritt*
Portrait
Page 10

Before taking up the history of the great manufacturing companies that make the New Britain of to-day known throughout the world, something ought to be said of one of the most remarkable men that our country has produced. This was Elihu Burritt, known throughout Christendom as the "Learned Blacksmith." It is hard to believe the bare statement of the facts of his life. He was the youngest son in an old-fashioned family of ten children. When Elihu was sixteen years of age his father died, and the boy soon after apprenticed himself to a blacksmith in his native town. He was very fond of reading, and had read about all there was in the small village library. Although obliged to work twelve hours a day he managed to find time to study. Even while standing at the forge he would set himself problems to be solved entirely in his head. Following is a specimen of some of the examples he did without making a single figure: "How many yards of cloth, three feet in width, cut into strips one inch wide, and

allowing half an inch at each end for the lap, would it require to reach from the center of the earth to the surface, and how much would it all cost at a shilling a yard?"

When about half through his apprenticeship, Elihu suddenly determined to study Latin. From a letter written by himself we make the following extract: "At this time it was necessary that I should devote every hour of daylight and a part of the evening to the duties of my apprenticeship. Still I carried my Greek grammar in my hat, and often found a moment for study. At evening I sat unassisted and alone to the Iliad of Homer, twenty books of which measured my progress in that language during the evenings of another winter."

When he had served his apprenticeship he saved a little money and went to New Haven, not to enter Yale College, as that was beyond his means, but with the idea that in the scholastic atmosphere of that place he would be enabled to study better. He took lodgings at a cheap tavern and began upon the very next day a severe course of study. At four thirty in the morning a fire would be made in the sitting room of the inn, and there he would take possession and study German until breakfast time. After breakfast he worked at Homer's Iliad with only a dictionary to help him. When the boarders came back for dinner he laid aside the



Cornelius B. Erwin

Henry E. Russell

Latin and Greek and took up work in Italian, as this was less likely to attract the attention of the rather noisy crowd. In the afternoon the Greek and Latin were brought out again, and in the evening he read Spanish until bedtime. In this way he labored for three months until his funds gave out and he was forced to return to work. Not long after, he turned his attention to the languages of the East, and in the library of the Antiquarian Society at Worcester, he found many books of great interest to him. He worked at the forge to support himself, but the use he made of his time is clearly shown by this extract from his diary:

Monday, June 18. Headache; forty pages Cuvier's Theory of the Earth; sixty-four pages French; eleven hours' forging.

June 19. Sixty lines Hebrew; thirty pages French; ten pages Cuvier's Theory; eight lines Syriac; ten lines Danish; ten ditto Bohemian; nine ditto of Polish; fifteen names of stars; ten hours' forging.

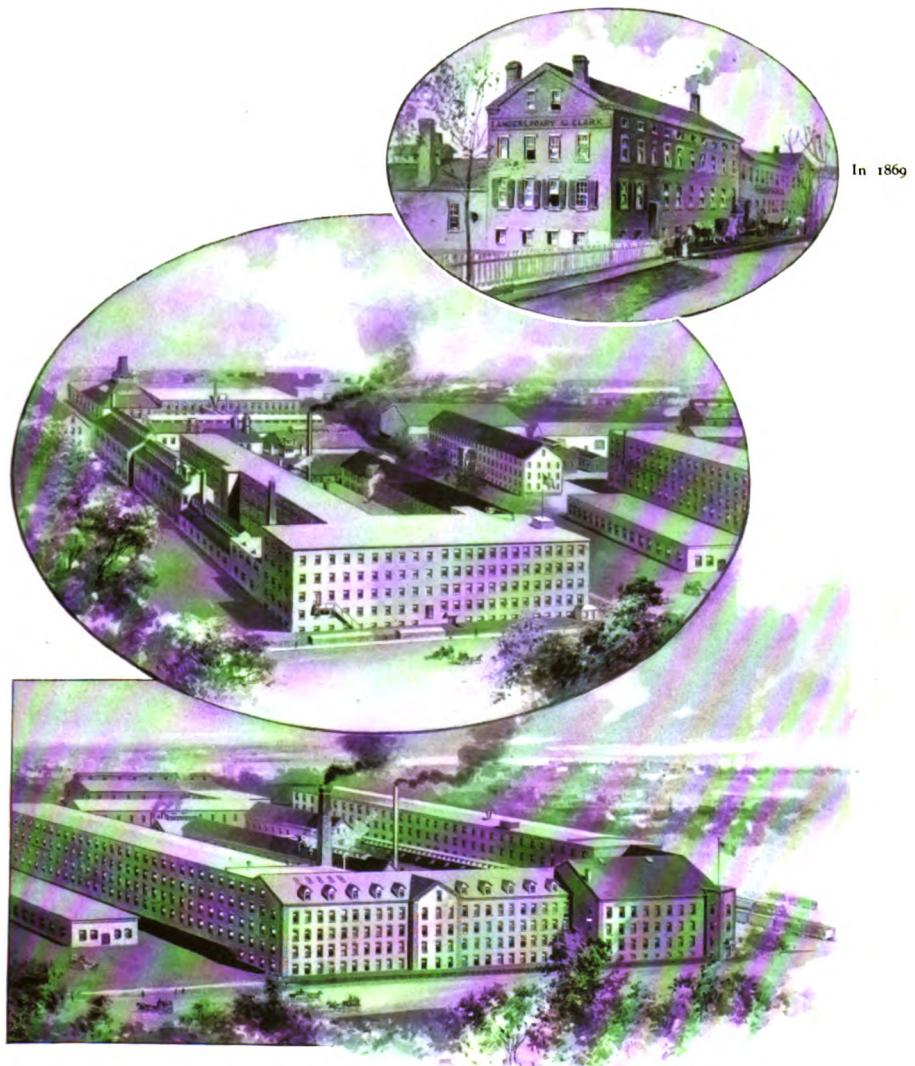
June 20. Twenty-five lines Hebrew; eight of Syriac; eleven hours' forging.

June 21. Fifty-five lines Hebrew; eight of Syriac; eleven hours' forging.

While in Worcester the idea came to him that he might possibly earn his living through his knowledge of languages. In a letter written to

William Lincoln, of Worcester, asking for work in translating, Burritt stated that he was able to read in *fifty different languages*. The letter thus written so impressed Mr. Lincoln that he sent it to Edward Everett. Everett made the letter public, and the sudden fame that came to the quiet worker was altogether too much for his modesty. Aid was offered him to carry on his studies at Harvard College, but this he could not bring himself to accept. Such was the interest in the man, however, that he was in much demand as a lecturer. In 1846, he went to Europe with the intention of making a short visit, but he stayed there three years, lecturing and writing. His aim in life from this time on was to bring about universal peace among the nations of the earth, and for this end he constantly labored. He was also active in reducing the ocean postage upon letters. Large of heart and unswerving in his purpose, he labored constantly for the benefit of his fellow men. He never married, and his last days were spent quietly at the home of his sister in his native place.

We have already spoken of the origin of the hardware industry in New Britain, but it is a far cry from the little shop where North and Shipman made sleigh bells, to the great factories of to-day, frequently occupying acres of ground, and giving employment to thousands of workmen. There are



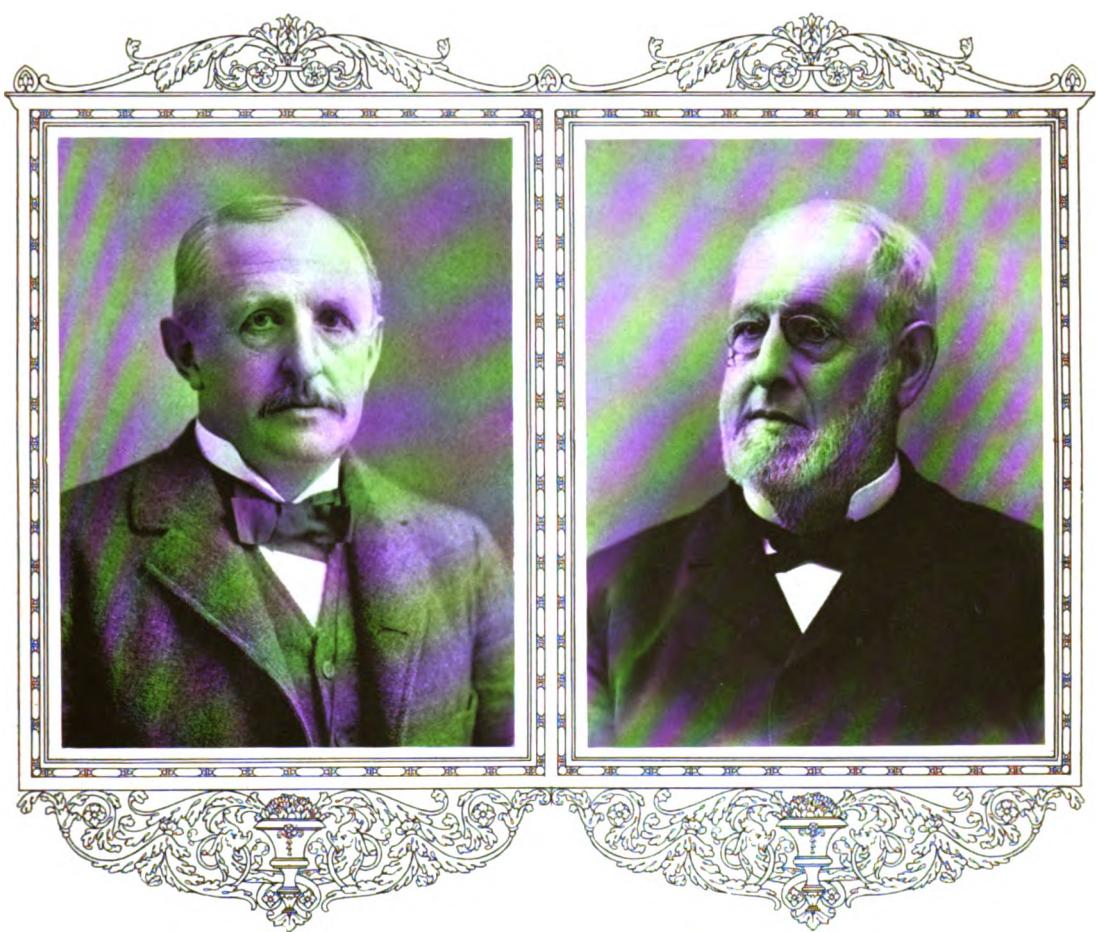
Factories of Landers, Frary & Clark, 1903

CHARLES F. SMITH . . . President
FRANCIS B. COOLEY . . Vice-President
GEORGE M. LANDERS . . *Secretary and Treasurer*

other flourishing industries in the city than those devoted to the manufacture of hardware, but important as they may be as individuals, they are almost lost among the hosts of the workers in metal. It is doubtful if there is another place in our whole country that equals this Connecticut city in the variety and extent of hardware manufactured, or one whose wares are more widely known.

The P. & F. Corbin Company, Russell & Erwin Manufacturing Company, Landers, Frary & Clark, Stanley Works, Stanley Rule and Level Company, are the giants among New Britain's industries, and each in its own particular line of products stands at the head of its class in the whole manufacturing world. To say that these are the largest hardware manufacturing companies in the city should in no way hide the fact that there are many other organizations doing a large business, and known far and wide for the excellence of their products. Among these are the North & Judd Manufacturing Company, Union Manufacturing Company, Humason & Beckley Manufacturing Company, Skinner Chuck Company, Hart & Cooley Company, and Traut & Hine Manufacturing Company.

In 1835, F. T. Stanley, W. B. Stanley, Emanuel Russell, Truman Woodruff and Norman Woodruff formed a partnership for the manufacture of



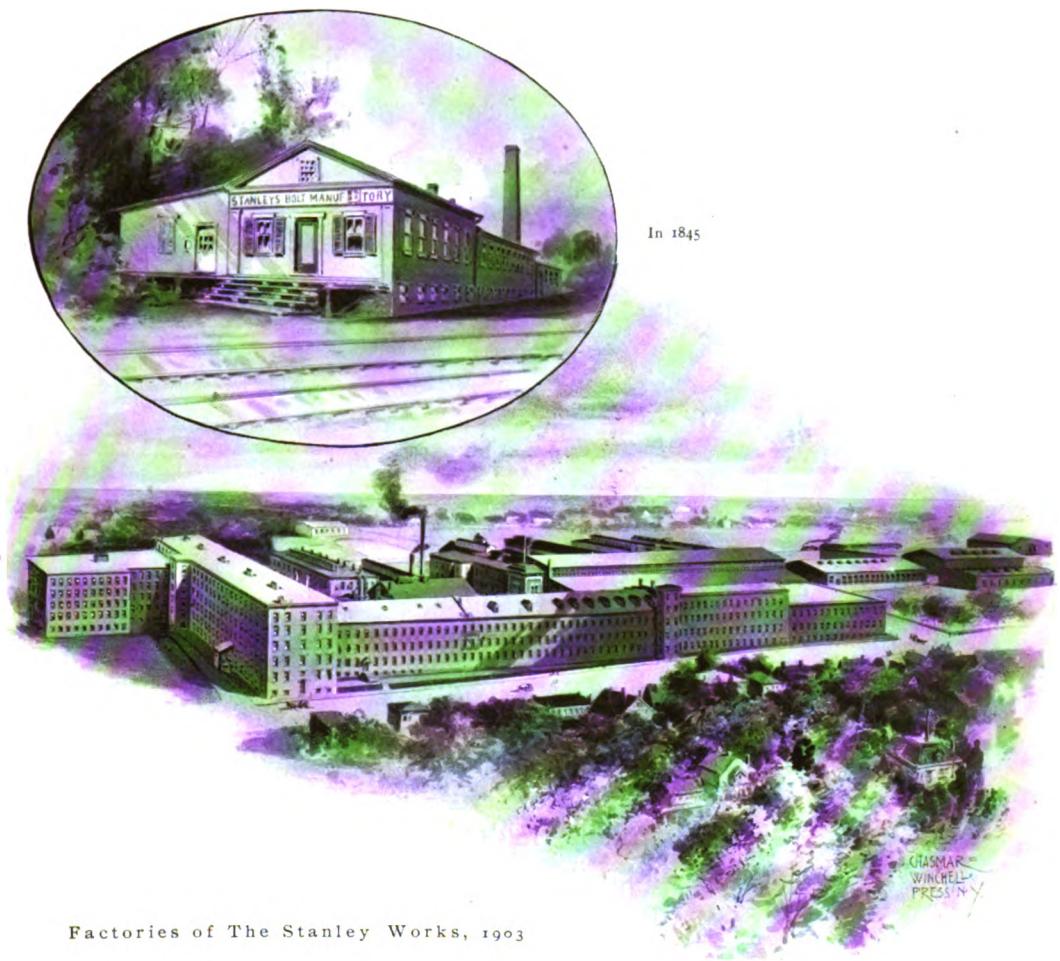
Charles S. Landers

George M. Landers

*Russell &
Erwin
Manufacturing Co.*

*Illustrations
Pages 13 and 10*

plate locks. Their capital stock was eighteen thousand dollars. With this they built a brick building 82 x 34 feet, and carried on a small business for several years. This was the beginning of the Russell & Erwin Manufacturing Company. A few years later the company was re-organized, all the original partners, except F. T. Stanley, withdrawing from the firm. Henry E. Russell and Cornelius B. Erwin became the new partners of F. T. Stanley, and the firm name became Stanley, Russell & Company. Various changes took place in the personnel of the firm during the next three years, but in 1850 the hardware business of North & Stanley, William H. Smith and some others in New Britain, together with the Albany Argillo Works, at Albany, N. Y., were bought by Russell & Erwin, and a stock company was formed known as the Russell & Erwin Manufacturing Company, a name the company bears to this day. Mr. Erwin was president of the new company, and Mr. Russell, treasurer, and they continued in these offices until Mr. Erwin's death in 1885, when Mr. Russell was elected president of the company. It is impossible to estimate the influence of Mr. Russell in the organization and development of the Russell & Erwin Manufacturing Company. He lived to see it become what was probably, at the time of his death, the largest single hardware manufacturing company in the world, but



Factories of The Stanley Works, 1903

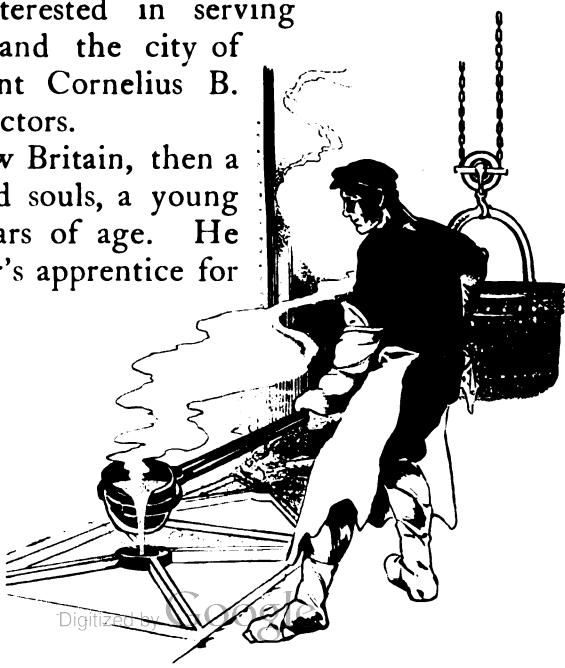
WM. H. HART *President and Treasurer*
GEORGE P. HART *Vice-President*
L. H. PEASE . . . *{ Secretary and
Assistant Treasurer*

Mr. Russell lived for most of the time in New York, and, on that account, was not so well known and was not so identified with the interests of the city itself, as was his partner, Cornelius B. Erwin. The active management of the Russell & Erwin Company rested for thirty-five years upon the shoulders of Mr. Erwin.

Cornelius Buckley Erwin was born at Booneville, N. Y., in 1811. His father was a shoemaker, able to give him only such instruction as a country village could afford. After leaving school young Erwin worked in his father's shop, but finding the work of making shoes disagreeable, he decided, when twenty-two years of age, to make a change. He left Booneville in 1832, with \$5 in money, and with his other possessions tied in a pocket handkerchief. He came to Hartford with a consignment of horses, and a short time after, we find him in the employ of Seth J. North and Henry Stanley. But working for others, however, was not what he was after, and we find him before long a partner in the firm of William H. Belden & Company, hardware makers, and later in the firm of Erwin, Lewis & Company. In 1839, he formed a partnership with Henry E. Russell, the company so formed becoming in a few years the Russell & Erwin Manufacturing Company. As the years went on Mr. Erwin became an exceedingly rich man. He was connected with

many other enterprises in Connecticut, and held directorships in many organizations in this State and elsewhere. Nearly all his great wealth was left for the good of the public, and his great interest in the city, in which he had labored so long, is shown by the many bequests made to it. The beautiful library building, the Old Ladies' Home, the Soldiers' Memorial, the Cemetery Chapel, by no means exhaust the list of his benefactions to this place. Mr. Erwin was a kindly man in his relations to all with whom he did business. On account of his wealth and standing as a business man, he was constantly besieged by applicants who desired to interest him in their own affairs, and to all he gave a patient hearing. He shunned a crowd, was always afraid of attracting attention, and disliked very much to travel. He also disliked exceedingly to have any act of charity made public, and many a hundred dollars he gave away with the caution, "Now don't say anything about it." He never sought public office, yet he was always interested in serving the public in his own way, and the city of New Britain will always count Cornelius B. Erwin among her great benefactors.

In 1829, there came to New Britain, then a small place of hardly a thousand souls, a young man, or rather boy, sixteen years of age. He bound himself out as a carpenter's apprentice for





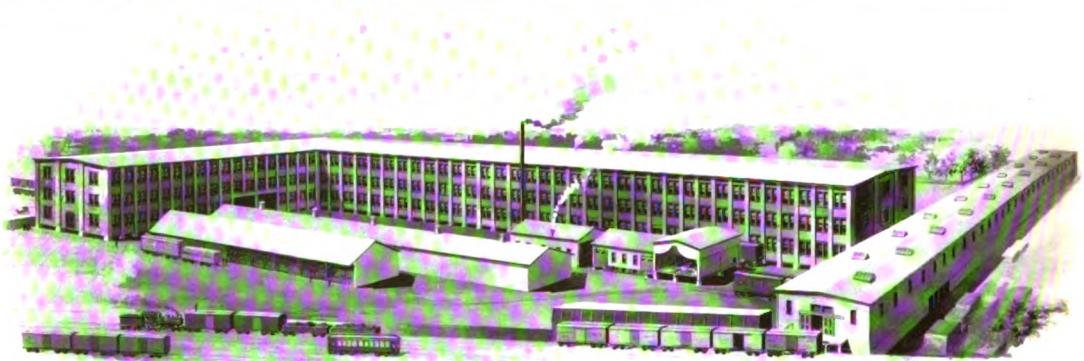
William H. Hart

Frederick T. Stanley

his board and clothes. His own terse words were: "Board, coarse; clothing, scant; hours of work, from sunrise to sundown." The boy's name was George M. Landers. On serving his apprenticeship he worked as a journeyman for five or six years. He soon saw, however, the possibilities that lay in manufacturing, and in 1842 he formed a partnership with Josiah Dewey for the manufacture of furniture casters, cupboard catches and other small articles. In 1847, this partnership was dissolved, and Mr. Landers started a foundry, built a small factory, and added to the old business the manufacture of coat and hat hooks, wardrobe hooks, brass hooks and eyes, etc. In 1853, his business was organized into a stock company under the name of Landers & Smith Manufacturing Company. In 1862, the business of Frary, Carey & Company, of Meriden, was purchased, and the company reorganized under the name of Landers, Frary and Clark, a firm known to-day, in addition to other lines of hardware, as the largest makers of table cutlery in the world. Mr. Landers retired from active management of the firm in 1870, and he died March 27th, 1895, full of years. As a citizen he worked heart and soul for his adopted town, and the general estimation in which he was held is shown by the fact that he was the town's first representative to the State.

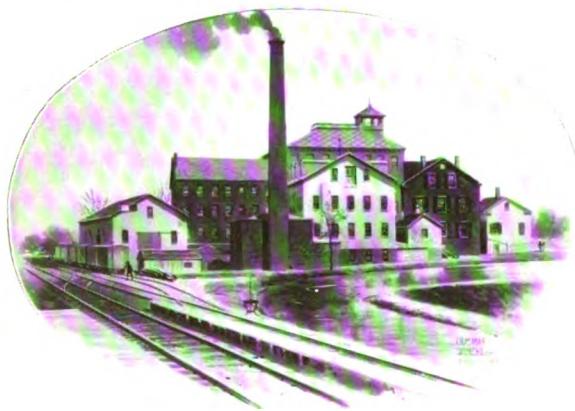
*Landers,
Frary &
Clark*

*Illustrations
Pages 10 and 21*



Factories of
The Stanley Rule & Level Co., 1903

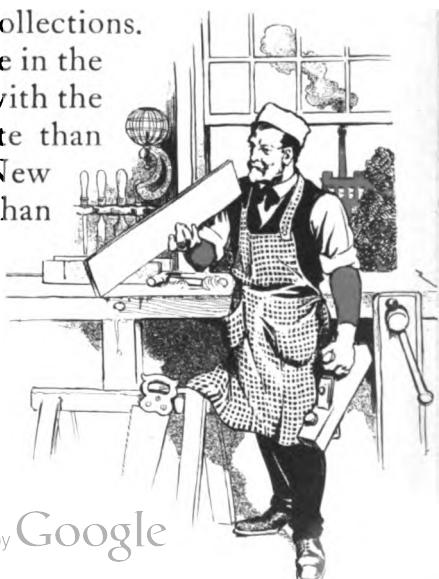
In 1869



C. E. MITCHELL President
A. W. STANLEY . . . Vice-President
C. B. STANLEY . . . and Secretary
Treasurer

and served six terms in that capacity, and was twice elected to Congress. The following extract is made up from an address given by Dr. J. W. Cooper: "If I were to characterize Mr. Landers' life and spirit by a single word, I should use the word generous. He was generous in his opinions, generous in his sympathies, generous in his character and generous in his devotion to the public welfare. Wherever there was a good work going on he was sure to have an interest in it, and especially for the enterprises that make for the material well-being of his fellows he put the whole force of his energetic personality."

When Mr. Landers retired from business in 1870, he left as an officer in the company, his son, Charles S. Landers, who, as time went on, took an ever-increasing part in the management of the business until he assumed the presidency. The Landers, Frary & Clark of to-day is largely the result of his labors. The amount of work that he did was enormous. As one connected with the firm has said, he made the goods, cared for the finances, sold the goods and made the collections. To do this he traveled for years in every State in the country, so that his business acquaintance with the trade was perhaps wider and more intimate than that of any other large manufacturer in New England. But Mr. Landers was far more than



a mere business man. It is rare to find a man whose interests reached out in so many directions. He could truthfully say that nothing human was alien to him. But it was the great social and political movements of his day that especially interested him. He was without doubt one of the best informed men in the State on all political questions, both national and European. Yet he would accept no office, though there was almost nothing in the gift of the State that might not easily have been his. He was president of the North & Judd Manufacturing Company, a director in the New Britain National Bank, Savings Bank and other business organizations in this and other cities, a director of the Young Men's Christian Association and the New Britain Hospital, and one of the founders of New Britain's fine system of electric street railways. No citizen in New Britain had a deeper hold upon the affections of the people, and his death at the age of fifty-four seemed a double calamity, in that it took from the people an eminent citizen and personal friend, and cut him off from those years of usefulness and honor that he seemed to have a right to expect.

In 1835, Mr. F. T. Stanley, as we have seen, was instrumental in starting the company that grew into the Russell & Erwin Manufacturing Company. In 1840, Mr. Stanley withdrew from this company, and after two years spent in the South, he began



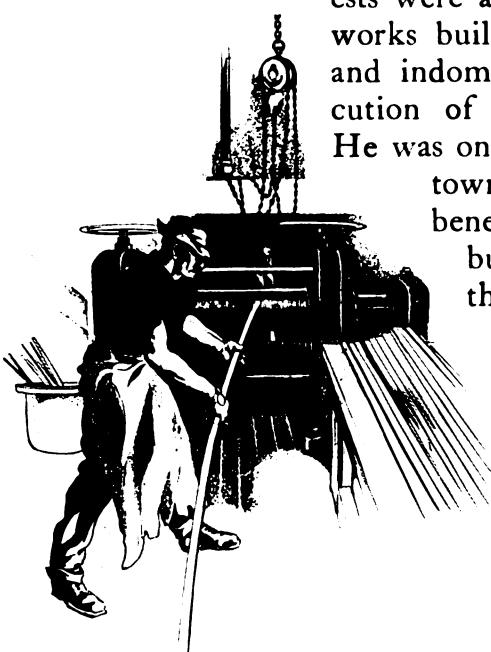
Henry Stanley

Charles L. Mead

The Stanley Works
Illustrations
Pages 22 and 30

the manufacture of bolts, hinges, drawer and chest handles, etc. The business slowly grew, and in 1852 a joint stock company was formed, known as the Stanley Works. Mr. Stanley was president of this company from its organization until his death in 1883, though he gave up the active management of the company in 1865.

Frederick Trenck Stanley traced his descent back to the Stanleys, who were among the original settlers of Farmington. He was born in 1802. As a young man he had a varied business career, both in the North and the South, and during the latter half of his life he occupied a very prominent place among the citizens of his native town. Camp, in his history of New Britain, says of him, "He was methodical in business matters, but at the same time energetic and progressive. He gave of his means and time for the benefit of others with a generosity unusual, and especially when public interests were at stake. He planned the city water works built in 1857, and, by unceasing energy and indomitable perseverance, secured the execution of the plans against much opposition. He was one of the active men in obtaining the town park, and having it set apart for the benefit of the public. He advocated the building of the branch railway, and the first engine running from New



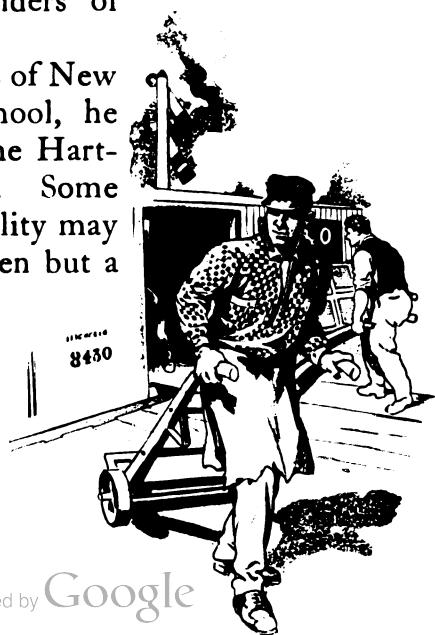
Britain to Berlin bore his name. He was active in securing the location of the Normal School at New Britain, and in promoting other public enterprises.

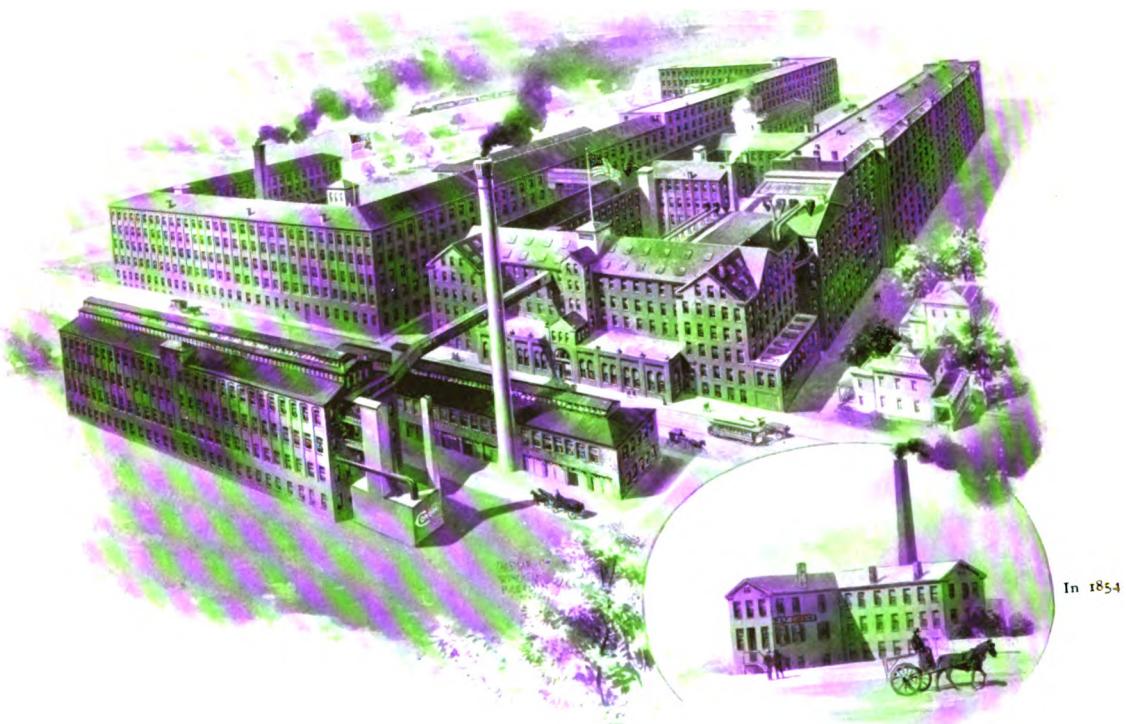
He generally declined public office, but consented to represent the town of Berlin in the legislature in 1834. He was elected the first warden of the borough of New Britain in 1850, and the first mayor of the city in 1871." He died August 2, 1883.

In 1854, Mr. William H. Hart entered the Stanley Works as secretary and treasurer, and will this year round out the half century as an officer of the company. Since the retirement of Mr. Stanley in 1865, Mr. Hart has been the manager of the company and since 1884, its president and treasurer.

Mr. William H. Hart was born in New Britain in 1834. He is a direct descendant of Stephen Hart, who was one of the original proprietors of Hartford, a deacon in Reverend Thomas Hooker's church, in both Cambridge and Hartford, and afterwards one of the original founders of Farmington.

Mr. Hart was educated in the schools of New Britain, and upon leaving the high school, he entered the employ of what was then the Hartford, Providence and Fishkill Railroad. Some estimation of his general character and ability may be gained from the fact that in 1854, when but a





Factories of P. & F. Corbin, 1903

In 1854

PHILIP CORBIN	<i>President</i>
A. CORBIN	<i>First Vice-President</i>
C. H. PARSONS	<i>Second Vice-President</i>
C. E. WETMORE	<i>Treasurer</i>
A. N. ABBE	<i>Secretary</i>

boy of nineteen, he was made the secretary and treasurer of the Stanley Works, and that it was but a few years later that the practical management of the business was put upon his shoulders. Year by year under his wise supervision the business has grown. A great plant has been erected on Myrtle Street, with tracks connecting with the New York and New England and the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroads, and a very large domestic and export trade has been developed in builders' hardware.

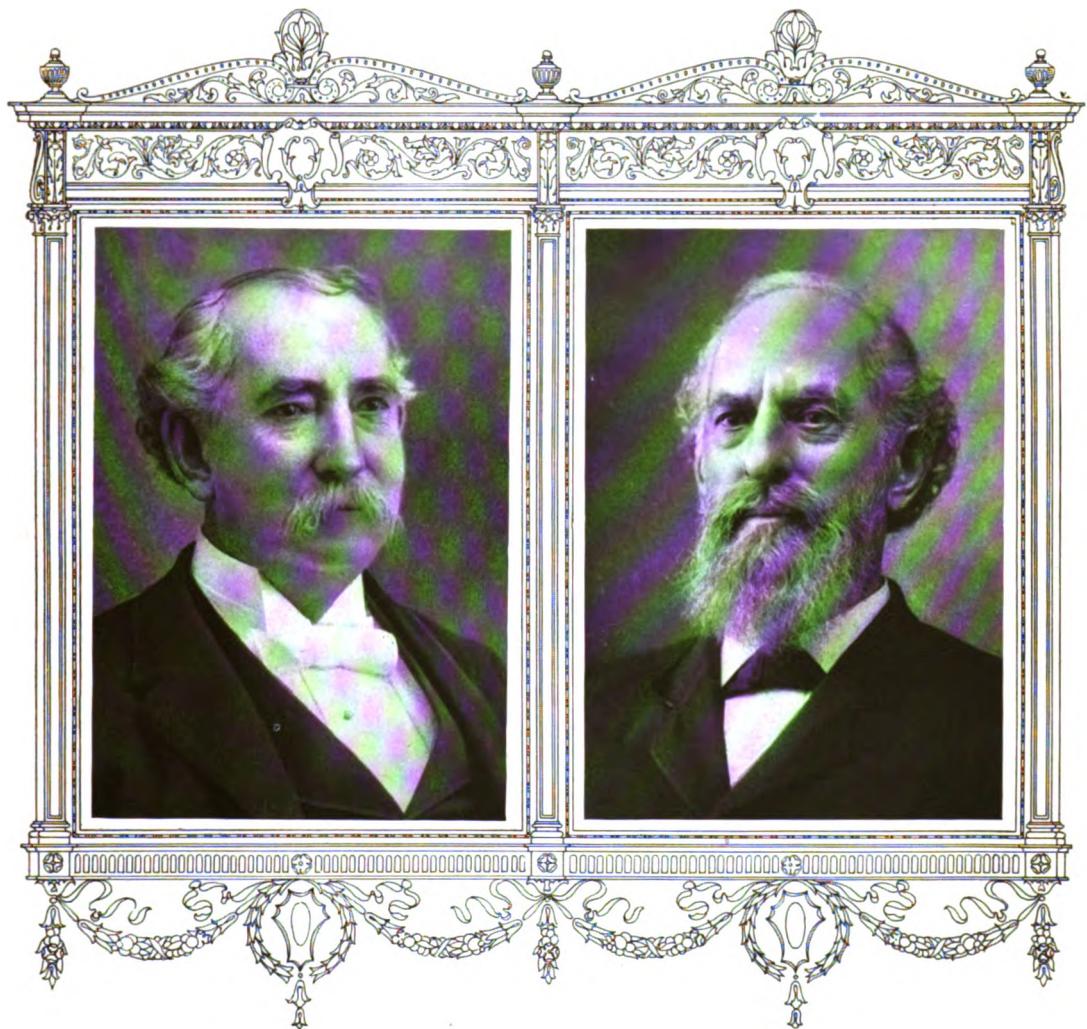
In the New Britain of to-day Mr. Hart fills an important place. Over-modest and retiring in all matters pertaining to himself, he has shunned that political preferment which might easily have been his, but he is always foremost in any movement for the good of the town. He has entered heartily into the life of the town, and is one of the first called upon in any public event. He is a stanch supporter of the South Congregational Church, the president of the Young Men's Christian Association, and a director and supporter of the city hospital.

The largest of the New Britain industries is the P. & F. Corbin Company, largest in size of plant, largest in number of men employed, and largest in the extent of the business done, and the man who founded this company, and directed it throughout the half century and more of its wonderful development is still its honored head.

*P. & F.
Corbin
Illustrations
Pages 31 and 37*

Philip Corbin was born in Willington, Conn., in 1824. His early life was spent upon a farm, and the strength and vigor that he gained by hard manual labor out of doors have stood him in good stead in the arduous labors of his long career. In 1842 he came to New Britain, and began work in the shop of Matteson, Russell & Company (afterwards Russell & Erwin). His pay at that time was fourteen dollars a month. A few months later we find him working for Henry Andrews, who had a contract to make locks for North & Stanley. He was determined to succeed and he worked evenings to make himself master of his trade. He was soon able to take out contracts on his own account, and before he was twenty-one he had nineteen men working for him. Feeling the need of a freer field for carrying out his ideas, he formed, in 1849, a partnership with his brother, Frank, and a skilled brass founder named Edward Doen. They began work in a modest shop which cost, with the land it was on, about six hundred dollars. The first venture of the new firm was the manufacture of ox-balls, for tipping the horns of cattle.

In 1849, Edward Doen sold his interest to Henry W. Whiting, and the firm became Corbin, Whiting & Company. In 1851, Mr. Whiting sold his interest to the two brothers, and the name,



Andrew Corbin

Philip Corbin

P. & F. Corbin, appeared for the first time in the list of New Britain enterprises.

The history of Philip Corbin's life from this time on is practically that of P. & F. Corbin. Throughout its entire existence he has had the active management of its affairs, and the position to which this company has attained is a testimonial of his business judgment and sagacity, and what may be achieved by a half century of advancement under a consistent, persistent, unchanging policy under the direction of one man. Mr. Corbin's close attention to business has not kept him from taking an active part in city and State affairs. He served as warden of the borough before the incorporation of New Britain as a town. He has been a member of the city council, and as water commissioner he supervised the enlargement of the system that has given the city its splendid supply. He has been a member of both branches of the State Legislature, and has always taken a keen interest in civic affairs.

In February, 1854, the firm of P. & F. Corbin was incorporated with a capital of fifty thousand dollars. Of the seven charter members, Philip Corbin, the president, and John B. Talcott, a director, are still identified with the company's interests.

In 1855, Andrew Corbin, the present first vice-president, joined the company, and he has ever

since taken an active part in the conduct of its affairs. In 1872, he was made general manager of the company, a position he has ever since held. Andrew Corbin is a quiet man, modest and kindly by nature, and one whose good deeds will never be known if he is to tell of them himself. A man of rare mechanical ability and sound judgment, it would be difficult to overestimate the influence he has exerted upon the business.

Year by year the P. & F. Corbin Company has grown. In spite of the fact that it has added factory after factory, it has always been cramped for room, and its plant, the largest of its kind in the world, is still growing. The catalogues issued from time to time show the ever-widening business done, and the ox-ball is still to be found for old association's sake, among the myriad productions of this great establishment.

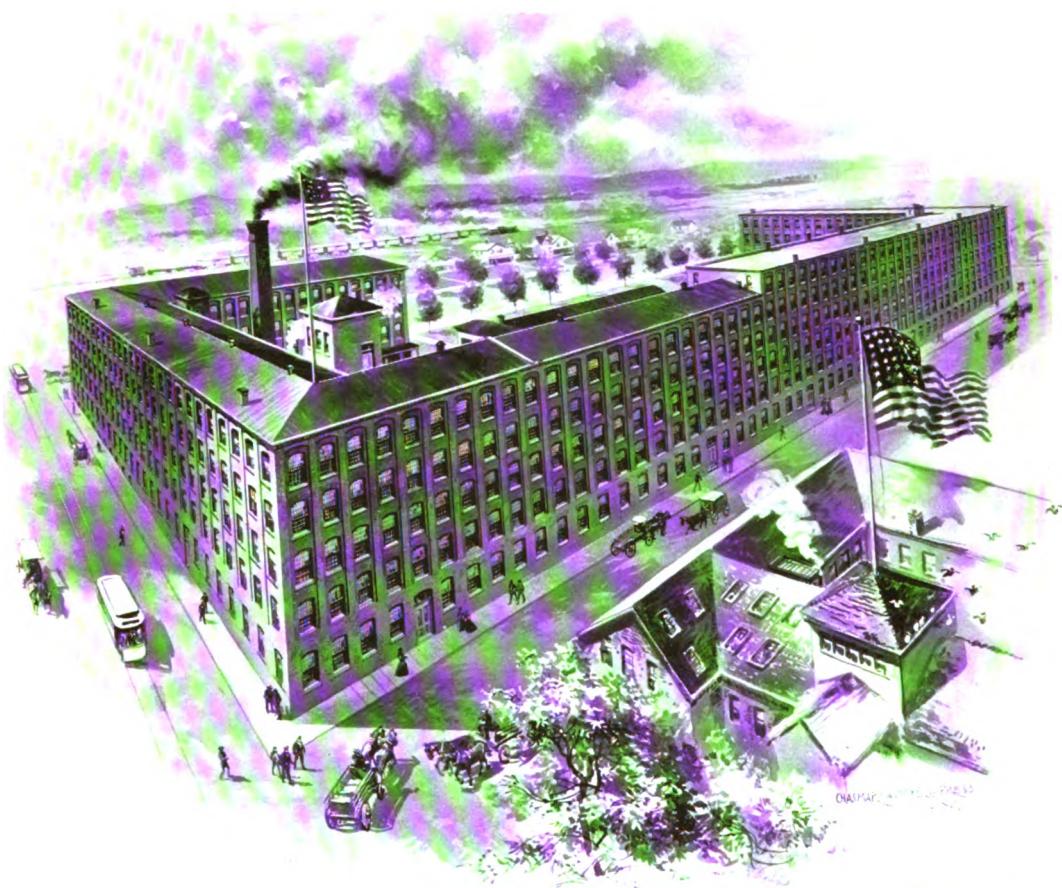
In 1879, the manufacture of cabinet locks was begun by the P. & F. Corbin Company, and the services of Mr. N. G. Miller were secured to assist in formulating the line and getting it upon the market. Prior to that time nothing in the way of cabinet locks had been made by the company, but now plans were made to cover this particular field with the same thoroughness that had been displayed in other directions.

In 1882, the cabinet lock business was sold

*Corbin
Cabinet
Lock Co.*

*Illustration
Page 40*





Factories Corbin Cabinet Lock Co., 1903

PHILIP CORBIN President
A. CORBIN First Vice-President
CHAS. M. JARVIS . . . Second Vice-President
GEO. W. CORBIN Secretary and Treasurer

to the Corbin Cabinet Lock Company, a new corporation organized to develop this branch of business. It has enjoyed advantages of an intimate relationship with the parent company, and under the broad and capable management of Geo. W. Corbin it has prospered exceedingly.

Another offspring of the great Corbin enterprises is the recently organized Corbin Screw Corporation. It has been formed by a union of the screw department of the Russell & Erwin Company and the screw department of the P. & F. Corbin Company.

In 1875, the manufacture of screws was begun by the Russell & Erwin Company, and two years later a similar department was started by the P. & F. Corbin Company. In 1891, the Russell & Erwin Company purchased the Dayton Screw Company. In May, 1903, the P. & F. Corbin and Russell & Erwin interests in the manufacture of screws were consolidated, and the Corbin Screw Corporation was formed. By virtue of its antecedents this new company, on the very day of its incorporation, was prepared to produce practically everything in the screw line. The president of the new company is Mr. Charles Glover, the former efficient head of the P. & F. Corbin screw department.

In 1850, a company was formed in New

*Corbin
Screw
Corporation*
Illustration
Page 72

*Stanley
Rule &
Level
Company*

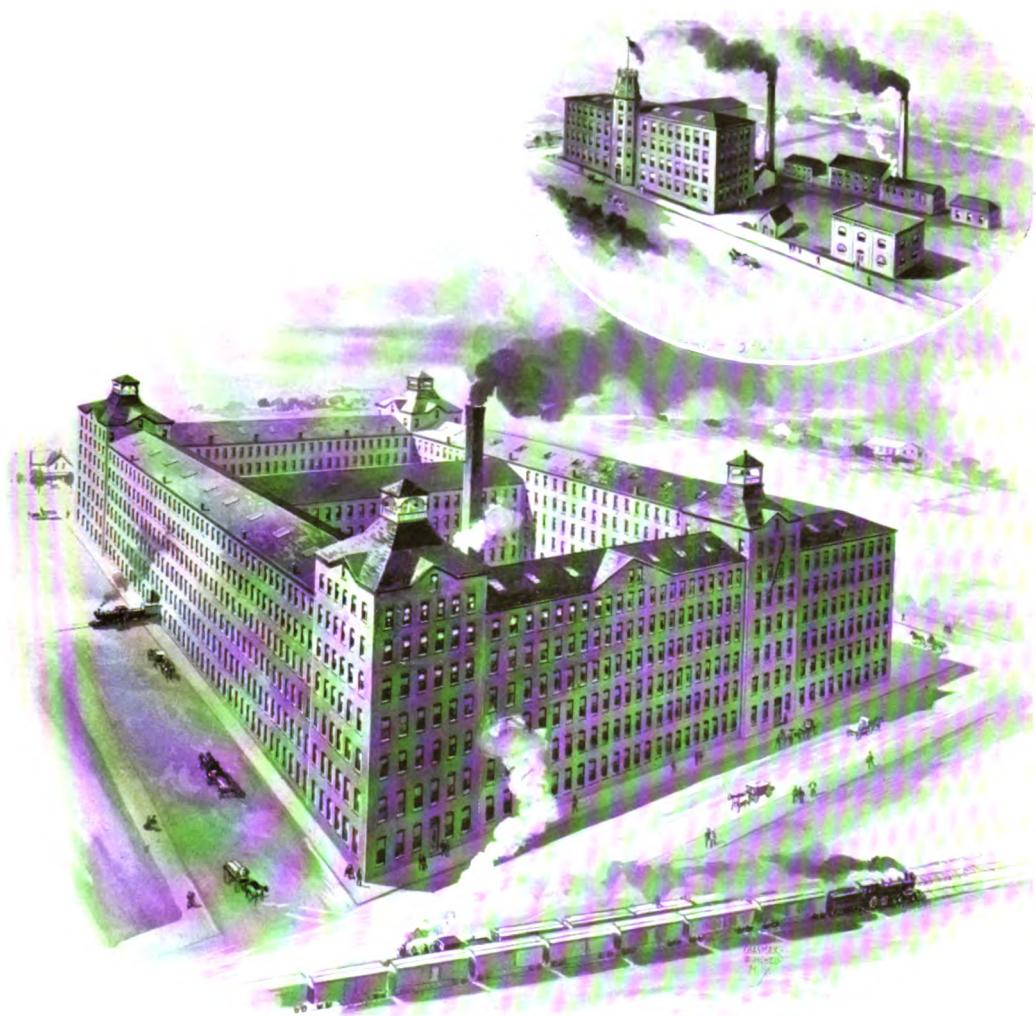
*Illustrations
Pages 28 and 31*

Britain, known as A. Stanley & Company, for the manufacture of boxwood and ivory rules. Three years later the Hall & Knapp Company was incorporated for the purpose of manufacturing try-squares and levels. In 1855, the rule business of Seth Savage, in Middletown, Connecticut, was bought by A. Stanley & Company, and the works were removed to New Britain. A. Stanley & Company and the Hall & Knapp Company were consolidated in 1858, under the articles of incorporation of the Hall & Knapp Company, and the name was changed to the Stanley Rule & Level Company. In 1860, the manufacture of iron planes was begun, and this has since constituted one of the most important parts of the business. The first president of this company was Henry Stanley, and he remained in office until his death in 1884.

Henry Stanley was born in 1807. In addition to the education afforded him by the schools of his native town, he had the benefit of advanced study at Munson Academy, Massachusetts. For a time after leaving school he studied medicine with Dr. Samuel

Hart, but the drift toward the manufacture of hardware was so strong in the town at that time, that he gave up medicine, and joined the firm of North, Smith & Stanley, afterwards North & Stanley. Later, he became interested in the firm of H. Stanley & Company. He did not confine





Factories Corbin Screw Corporation, 1903

CHARLES GLOVER . . . President
C. A. EARL . . . Vice-President
THEO. E. SMITH Secretary and Treasurer
W. J. SURRE . . . Assistant Secretary

his attention, however, to the manufacture of hardware, but becoming interested in the making of knit goods, he joined the New Britain Knitting Company, and was made secretary, treasurer and superintendent. He was a man of very wide business interests, and at his death he was president of three of the largest industries in New Britain, the American Hosiery Company, the Stanley Works and the Stanley Rule and Level Company.

An important addition to the company was made when the business of C. L. Mead, at Brattleboro, Vt., was purchased in 1862 by the Stanley Rule & Level Company. Mr. Mead's works were noted throughout the country, and the union of these two companies placed the Stanley Rule & Level Company at the head of the world in the manufacture of its specialties, a position that it holds to this day.

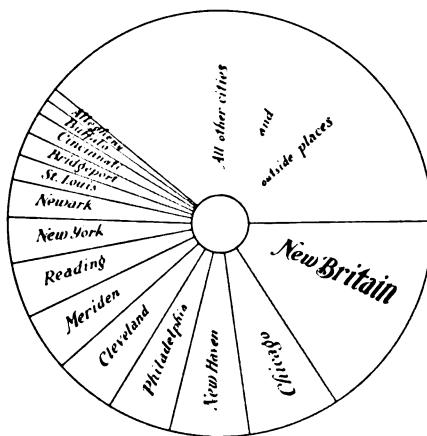
Mr. Mead, upon selling his business to the Stanley Rule & Level Company, moved to New Britain, and became actively interested in the company, and remained with it till his death in 1899. Upon the death of Henry Stanley in 1884, Mr. Mead was made president of the company. He was known as one of the ablest hardware manufacturers in the United States, and the magnificent condition of the company at the present time is a monument to his memory.



Views of New Britain from Walnut and Burritt Hills

Mr. Frederick N. Stanley succeeded Mr. Mead as president, but his untimely death in 1900 cut short what promised to be a business life of weight and influence.

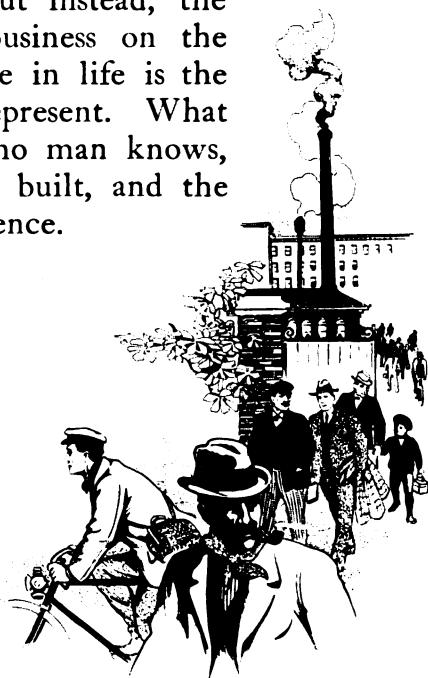
Relative size of cities in the United States based on their manufacture of hardware.



Statistics are frequently misleading, but the hundred years that the people of this town have devoted to the hardware interests must have profoundly affected the character of the people. A great body of educated workmen is necessary for such enterprises as have been described, and one is therefore less astonished to learn that among the States of the Union, Connecticut stands first in the number of patents granted, and that New Britain is first of Connecticut towns. The above diagram,

compiled by the Philadelphia Commercial Museum, is hardly needed to show that New Britain is justly entitled to be called "The Hardware City of America."

In the foregoing sketch of the development of the hardware industry in New Britain, an attempt has been made to note some of the causes that account for the unique position of New Britain as a manufacturing city. No one of the companies represented in this sketch has been in existence for less than half a century. Their beginnings were humble, but their growth has been sound and healthful throughout. There have been none of the startling and pyrotechnic displays in finance that are all too common to-day, but instead, the wise and honest management of business on the part of leaders, whose greatest pride in life is the good name of the companies they represent. What the years to come have for them no man knows, but the foundations have been well built, and the future may be awaited with confidence.



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